

Deaf Culture Question of the Week – Apr. 29-May 3, 2013  
Bill Newell, Principal Washington School for the Deaf

Which of these famous Deaf persons communicated the profound reverence that Deaf people have for sign language when he stated:

"As long as we have deaf people on Earth we will have sign language ..... and I hope we all will love and protect our beautiful sign language as the noblest gift God has given to the deaf."

- a) Robert P. McGregor, First President of the NAD
- b) Edmund Booth, Chair of the first Convention of the NAD
- c) Edward Miner Gallaudet, First Superintendent of the Columbia Institution later to become Gallaudet College
- d) George W. Veditz, Seventh President of the NAD

Go to the bottom for the answer.

Answer: "d" - George W. Veditz, seventh President of the National Association of the Deaf, was passionate about the fundamental right of deaf people to communicate through sign language. In the early 1900's he saw sign language being threatened by those persons who were advocating for oral methods of educating deaf students. In his speech on "The Preservation of Sign Language" he likens these persons who would take the beautiful sign language away from deaf people to the pharaohs of Egypt who enslaved the Jewish people. He calls them "the enemies of sign language and enemies of the true welfare of the deaf."

Veditz ends his speech with the famous and often quoted prediction and plea:

"As long as we have deaf people on Earth we will have sign language ..... and I hope we all will love and protect our beautiful sign language as the noblest gift God has given to the deaf."

George W. Veditz's words remain as relevant today as when they were prophetically uttered in 1913! Deaf people and their hearing allies must remain ever vigilant and oppose those who would threaten sign language.

See Veditz deliver this powerful speech in ASL here:  
<http://www.nad.org/news/2012/8/celebrating-george-veditzday>

Read an English translation of the speech here:  
<http://www.rid.org/UserFiles/File/pdfs/veditz.pdf>

Read about the life of George W. Veditz here:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Veditz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Veditz)